

Arizona Department of Education **Arizona LEARNS**

Alternative School Definition

A public school desiring identification as an *alternative school* must apply to the Arizona State Board of Education for such status. These schools must be separate entities according to Arizona school finance provisions (funded as a school, reported as a school, etc.). **Alternative school status will *not* be granted to a program within a school.**

An *alternative school* is a school that the Arizona State Board of Education has determined meets *all* of the following criteria:

A school operated by a school district must have adopted a mission statement that clearly identifies its purpose and intent to serve a specific student population (please see criterion #3) that will benefit from an alternative school setting. A charter school must be expressly chartered to serve a specific student population that will benefit from an alternative school setting. (Note: The school's mission statement or charter must be communicated to the public.)

The educational program and related student services of the school must match the mission or charter of the school.

The school must intend to serve students exclusively in one or more of the following categories:

- Students with behavioral issues (documented history of disruptive behavior)
- Students identified as dropouts
- Students in poor academic standing who are either severely behind on academic credits (more than one year) or have a demonstrated pattern of failing grades
- Pregnant and/or parenting students
- Adjudicated youth

Any school offering secondary instruction for academic credit used to fulfill Arizona State Board of Education graduation requirements (in part or in full) must offer a diploma of high school graduation.

Please Note: No public school district may have more than ten percent (10%) of their total student population attending an alternative school or any combination of alternative schools served by the district at one time. Smaller districts, if they wish, may participate in the development of a "consortium" alternative school.